**TO:** COUNCIL OF MAYORS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

FROM: GRACE GALLUCCI, CFO and Senior Deputy Executive Director of

Finance and Performance Management

**RE:** Presentation on Non-Fixed-Route Out-of-Region Service

**DATE:** April 23, 2012

As was discussed in August, five of Pace's fixed bus routes and one of Metra's lines protrude outside the six-county region's boundaries. As a follow-up to the August 2011 presentation on this type of fixed-route, out-of-region service, a further analysis was completed to identify non-fixed-route service that is provided outside of the RTA's six-county jurisdiction as well. Since CTA and Metra provide only fixed-route service, this only applies to Pace, with their non-fixed-route services falling into three broad categories: ADA paratransit, non-ADA paratransit, and vanpool. Both ADA paratransit and vanpool conduct significant extraterritorial operations. Non-ADA paratransit services such as Dial-a-Ride are not permitted to operate out-of-region. The ADA paratransit trips are for service within the ¾ mile buffer of out-of-region fixed-route service. The vast majority of the out-of-region vanpool users are destined for suburban workplaces within the region, and would otherwise drive individually or in smaller carpools.

#### **Background**

Section 2.07 of the RTA Act provides the statutory basis for operating service between points within the RTA region and points outside the RTA region. An August 2011 Board presentation focused on the identification of extraterritorial fixed-route service, and it was requested of the RTA staff to study and report back on the extent of non-fixed-route extraterritorial service. Such service definitely exists, with the following findings organized into three broad areas: ADA paratransit, non-ADA paratransit, and vanpool.

### **Pace ADA Paratransit**

As required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) ADA regulations, complementary ADA paratransit service must be provided for trips between origins and destinations located within a ¾ mile corridor on each side of regular fixed route bus and rail service, including a ¾ mile radius around the

route's endpoint. Commuter rail is excluded from this requirement, as are commuter (non-stop) bus routes.

If the ¾ mile buffer around the fixed route extends outside the geographic jurisdiction of the transit agency, ADA paratransit service must still be provided unless there is a legal bar to doing so by the neighboring jurisdiction. Pace has five fixed bus routes that protrude out-of-region, two of which are commuter routes and are thus excluded from the ADA requirement. The three remaining fixed routes generate a valid requirement for the provision of out-of-region ADA paratransit service and are discussed below:

## Route 529:

Pace route 529 extends approximately one mile into Kendall County south of Aurora, providing service to the Settler's Landing shopping area and ensuring a safe turnaround location for the bus operators. The resulting ADA buffer is shown in attachment 1. In the first eight months of 2011, 44 out-of-region ADA paratransit trips were operated to and from this area, at an approximate total cost of \$1,900.

## Routes 350 and 364:

Pace routes 350 and 364 both contain the same 0.7 mile loop into Lake County, Indiana east of Calumet City, providing service to the Hammond Transit Center and also ensuring a safe turnaround location for the bus operators. The resulting ADA buffer is shown in attachment 2. Two significant health care facilities lie within the buffer on the Indiana side; St. Margaret Hospital and DeVita Dialysis Center. In the first eight months of 2011, 389 out-of-region ADA paratransit trips were operated to and from this area, at an approximate total cost of \$16,700.

These portions of the three routes, with 433 combined trips thus far in 2011, are the only locations where ADA paratransit is authorized to operate outside the six-county region. The approximate annualized cost of conducting the ADA paratransit out-of-region operations is \$27,900.

#### **Pace Non-ADA Paratransit**

Non-ADA paratransit at Pace consists of three components; Dial-a-Ride, Call-n-Ride, and the Community Transit Program. These services may be funded by Pace as an efficient alternative to fixed-route service, and in many instances the services are funded in part or in full by the local governments involved.

## Dial-a-Ride:

There are 68 Dial-a-Ride projects spanning the entire six-county area, utilizing 157 Pace-owned vehicles to provide demand-response service to 210 communities with one-day advance reservations required. Dial-a-Ride eligibility may be limited to seniors or disabled, although many are also open to the general public. Fares and service agreements vary by project, with some operated directly by Pace and others by private providers. Service areas arrangements are defined in the individual agreements and are typically limited to municipality or township borders since they are generally provide a large portion of the funding for these services. Out-of-region travel is not permitted.

## Call-n-Ride:

Two existing Call-n-Ride projects near Joliet and in Round Lake will be joined by two new projects in Wheaton and St. Charles in late 2011. Call-n-Ride differs from Dial-a-Ride in that same-day reservations are permitted and the service is available to anyone. Fares are the same as fixed-route (\$1.75) and the service areas are well-defined, ensuring no out-of-region operations.

## **Community Transit:**

The Community Transit Program replaced the Municipal Vanpool Program in 2007. Pace provides the vans and covers maintenance expenses on 93 vehicles that are operated by municipalities to provide flexible public transportation within their communities. Out-of-region travel is not permitted.

## Pace Vanpool

Vanpool is comprised of three distinct programs; Vanpool Incentive Program (VIP or "traditional vanpool"), Employer Shuttle, and the Advantage Program. The vanpool programs share the common goal of reducing emissions and congestion and as a group they maintain a recovery ratio of around 80%.

## <u>Traditional Vanpool:</u>

There are currently about 290 traditional vanpools in operation, averaging around six persons per vehicle, commuting together to the same employer or employment area within the RTA region. Vans "go home" with their primary drivers and may be based outside the region. There are 55 traditional vanpools based in Indiana, as far away as LaPorte; 29 based in Wisconsin, as far away as Milwaukee and Janesville; and 26 based in Illinois counties outside the RTA's jurisdiction including Boone, Winnebago, Ogle, LaSalle, Kendall, and Grundy. As a result, out-of-region vanpool operations are extensive and occur almost every day.

In addition to their commuting miles, all vanpool drivers are allowed to drive 300 personal miles per month and can carry-over unused miles. Vanpool drivers based within the region are allowed to use the vans on personal trips outside of the RTA region, up to 500 miles round trip as measured from Pace headquarters, but must obtain prior written permission to do so. Vanpool drivers based outside the region, however, are required to obtain written permission for all out-of-region personal trips of more than 20 miles from their home bases. The recovery ratio for traditional vanpool is around 95%.

### Employer Shuttle:

The Employer Shuttle vanpool program provides vans to suburban employers that are used to transport their employees to and from RTA transit connection points. This is a small operation, with 17 vans currently in service but boasting a recovery ratio above 100%. To be eligible, employers must be located within the six-county region, therefore no out-of-region travel is generated.

## Advantage:

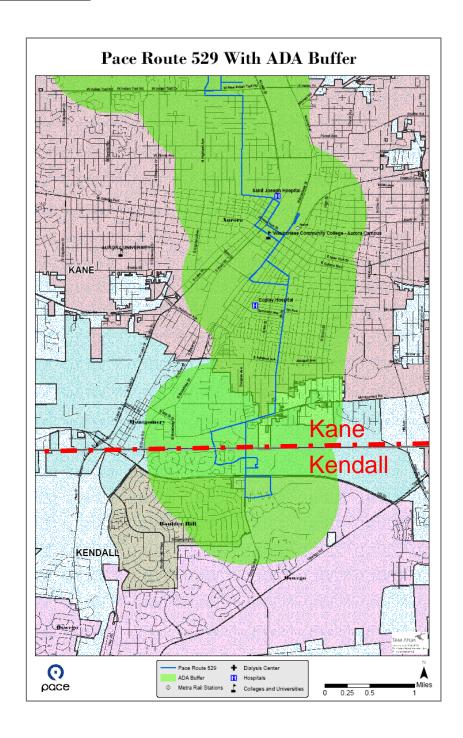
The Advantage vanpool program is large, operating 318 vans that are based at work sites and rehabilitative workshops within the six-county region. These vans serve as a transit alternative to employees and individuals with various disabilities. Although the recovery ratio of Advantage is the lowest of the vanpool programs at about 62%, this program provides an alternative to more expensive ADA paratransit service. Out-of-region travel is permitted with prior permission from Pace. However, this is extremely infrequent as Pace reported only two instances in recent years.

## **Conclusions**

Legitimate out-of-region operations are being generated by both ADA paratransit and vanpool service. The ADA paratransit operations are required by law and the vanpool operations meet that program's goals of reduced congestion and emissions within the region, while producing a high recovery ratio. Based on the review and analysis performed, RTA staff does not recommend any changes to the non-fixed-route out-of-region service currently operated as part of the regional transit system.

GG/DDA/DKA

# **Attachment 1**



## **Attachment 2**

